

The Brethren Evangelist.

PUBLISHED AT
THE BRETHREN PUBLISHING HOUSE.

"Let Us go on Unto Perfection."

TERMS, \$1.50
PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

VOLUME XI.

ASHLAND, OHIO, JULY 10, 1889.

NUMBER 28.

Keep Me Near Thee.

The lower I keep in the valley,
The higher the plane of love;
Far richer the promise of glory,
And greater my blessings prove.
The nearer I keep to my Shepherd,
The greener the pastures grow;
The deeper I drink from the fountain,
More sweetly the waters flow.
The closer I hide 'neath the shadow,
Of the everlasting wings,
The brighter the light of his beauty,
And sweeter my spirit sings.
The nearer I cling to my Saviour,
The closer he stays with me;
Then draw me, O heavenly Shepherd,
Nearer, still nearer to thee.

LIZZIE UNDERWOOD.

Does the Brethren Church Need a Creed?

The above question is somewhat agitated by some of our brethren and friends. We take it for granted that all have the good of the cause at heart, though they may differ to some extent as to what is best to do under the circumstances. Christendom being divided as it is, it seems at a mere casual glance to be almost necessary in order to occupy the position of a distinct body or separate organization to formulate some kind of a confession of faith in order that our distinctive church features might be perpetuated. Some indeed feel alarmed that as matters now stand we will lose our identity as a separate or distinct organization.

Let us look for a moment into facts connected with the history of the Brethren church. In its present organization it dates back to 1708. It originated in Swartzenau, Germany. From the first to the present this church without a shadow of a creed or church legislation has taught and practiced faith, repentance, baptism by trine immersion, feetwashing, the Supper and communion, the kiss of charity, the non-oath and non-resistance doctrine, in all of which they exist today intact though torn into several distinct organizations by other causes.

The above enumerated ordinances and principles are so strictly gospel that no effort whatever has ever been attempted to do away with them. The things on which the church split are things foreign to gospel teaching, such as style of apparel, hair cutting and naturally accompanying superstitious fallacies. Why brethren at this date should desire the formulation of a creed on these distinctive features in the Brethren church seems strange to us. The church has always been a unit on these things. Even that legislative body, the German Baptist Annual Meeting has never had occasion to legislate as to the necessity of these ordinances and principles. The necessity of legislation on their part seems never to involve the facts of the gospel. To our knowledge there absolutely does not exist the slightest reason for the introduction of legislative authority and creedism into the church. The Brethren church never knew aught (religiously) outside of practical recognition of these ordinances and principles. A church which does not so regard them is not a Brethren church, and is not hon-

orable should it claim to be such. It may be possible, but I do not believe that a Brethren (I mean in name) organization exists today which as a body ignores these ordinances and principles. That some may be aping popular churches may be true, but the same is true of all sects. Don't get frightened at shadows, brethren. If our cause is the Lord's cause it will stand of itself. At least our intervention would not save. 'Power belongeth to God.'

In August, 1858, when a boy of twenty years of age, under the preaching of Elder Daniel Fry, David Barklow, Benjamin Kepner and Enoch Eby, the writer joined the Dunkard (properly Brethren) church. I was influenced to this step by my love for the gospel alone doctrine which these ministers so earnestly preached; a love which I never lost, but for which today I entertain the highest regard possible. In fact, it is love for this doctrine that prompts me to write. To the customs of the church at that time I conformed, and at the time of my expulsion I agreed to continue conformity to customs, as customs but not as articles of faith, believing that on that line the gospel was sufficient, as I had been taught by the ministers afore named.

At the Dayton conference the Brethren church was reconstructed on the basis of non-conformity to human customs and traditions as articles of faith. No necessity was then known to exist to give special expression separately on doctrinal tenets. Such necessity never had been known in the history of the church, and until such a necessity does exist, I for one am opposed to the introduction of anything in the form of church creed. The introduction of legislative authority tore the church asunder. Many of the wounds are still sore. In heaven's name, brethren, be cautious about causing fresh wounds. Have we not seen enough? Has there not been enough heart bleeding? Since 1708, one hundred and eighty-one years ago, the church has been a perfect unit on her faith, repentance, baptism, supper and communion, feet washing, salutation, non-swearing, non-resistance doctrines. To say the least, at present there exists no cause for anything in the form of a church creed. Should congregations drift away from (or individuals either) these gospel features let us pray for their return. The ministry has great responsibility on this line. It pleased God to save the world, not by the foolishness of church creeds, but by the 'foolishness of preaching.' Legislation never has converted a heart to God, nor ever will. Unless our service is rendered voluntarily, prompted by love, there is no saving quality in it.

In the writer's field of labor, reports are occasionally set afloat that the Brethren churches are drifting away from observing the humble and significant ordinances of the gospel. So far as I know, it is a base slander, and in several instances I have taken oc-

casional to brand it as such. But it has its effect. Some good brethren become excited over such reports and with the best motives begin to think it necessary that the Brethren church should give some expression in the formulation of doctrinal tenets, separate from simply the New Testament. At present I see no occasion for this; hardly think I ever will. If brethren should desire a peculiar style of dress adopted into our doctrinal code, then of course a separate creed would be needed. If the quality of food or the mere methods of an administration are essential, then, too, we need a creed separate from the New Testament. Individual members may not be in full harmony with all the practices of the church, but the church is not an individual member. Any individual member who cannot conscientiously work with the church of which he is a member had better go where he can so work. Should the writer ever believe it unrequited to practice the ordinance as practiced by the Brethren church he will quietly and peaceably—if permitted to do so—seek a home somewhere else. Let us have peace, and as creeds tend to war let us discard them. We have seen sorrow enough from the introduction of creedism into the church.

We have been waiting for some of our more able brethren to write articles for the EVANGELIST bearing on the distinctive doctrinal features of the Brethren church. Why don't Beer, Hollinger, Worst, Swihart, Brown, McFaden, Gnagey, Bashor, and a host of others prominent in bringing the church out from the bondage of human traditions, doctrinized, favor us with such articles, and then put to silence enemies who delight to slander us? Some of us have been writing controversially on subjects in which none of us see any special saving merit. Now let us turn our guns on our common foe and defend and strengthen the things on which our church (of every branch) has always stood united and on which we so-called Dunkards can never split. All who forsake these landmarks cease to be entitled to the name Brethren. Old Order Brethren or German Baptist. Outside of these ordinances and principles we forfeit all there is in so-called Dunkard doctrine. The history of the church sustains us in the assertion that until the usurpation of authority on the part of the clergy, and the introduction of legislative conferences, the church stood immovably united, and we repeat that as yet in the history of the church there has been no need of the introduction of creedism on gospel teaching.

Yours for letting good enough alone.

W. J. H. BAUMAN.

Occidentals.

THAT CIRCULAR, distributed at the German Baptist Annual Meeting is only a truthful statement of facts as they exist at present and have been from the

beginning to the division. As time passes the principles laid down by the brethren who were made the 'scape-goats,' according to the article above alluded to, have been demonstrated to have been correct, and the assertion so often repeated that the 'Conservative' Dunkard church is constituted of Progressives on one hand, who should stand with the Brethren; and of Old Orderites on the other part who should belong to the Old German Baptists is being verified as time passes. The only fault we have to find with the circular is, that the writer did not have the courage to append his signature. This would have cost him his standing in the church; but evidently he is not at home where he belongs and should find a more congenial church house among the Old German Baptists. I find in the Organ of the German Baptist church an article written by the venerable B. C. Moomaw of that church from which I have clipped the following extract, which is a thorough exposition of

THE BRETHREN IDEA BY A GERMAN BAPTIST ELDER.

It was hoped that many of the most perplexing questions of discipline had been settled, when the extreme elements left, and set up for themselves. But such is not the case. We see trouble ahead, and would be unfaithful not to sound a note of warning. Those who advocate a radical policy cannot close their eyes to the dangers of such a course. The history of the past ten years gives plenty of illustrations.

There seems to be no end to this controversy which embitters many a heart, and weakens the general bond of brotherly love. We fear that the principle is wrong. We can make rules, but we cannot force people to obey them. They may obey outwardly through fear, or for the sake of peace, but such obedience is insincere. It does not come from the heart. It is hypocritical, and so the last state of that man is worse than the first. Unless we are convinced that we ought to do a thing because it is right, the doing of it will make it worse. The Scripture always recognizes this principle, and always seeks to convert the heart before it undertakes to direct the life. Even then it directs from within. So the discipline of the new Testament comes in the form of teaching,—of precept,—and not in the form of ecclesiastical law. We simply offer these suggestions to awaken thought on this serious subject. The problem is a very difficult one, and the end is not yet.

We hope the readers of the Gospel Messenger will read the article, think over it, and profit by it. Let the grand truth that 'the discipline of the New Testament comes in the form of teaching,—of precept,—and not in the form of ecclesiastical law,' be once universally recognized and adopted, then contention will cease, and the division in the Dunkard church will be a thing of the past.

E. L. YODER.

Pleasant Hill, Ohio.

Shortly after taking charge of the Pleasant Hill congregation, I was invited to the home of Mr. Samuel McBride, to visit Sister Linnie, his wife, who had been confined to her bed for over nine months with hip disease. I found sister McBride a terrible sufferer, and to all appearances nearing death's door. I talked and pray-

ed with her, and what a joy it was to be in her presence, to hear her talk of the peace and joy she had trusting in her God. She was so patient, yet at times, suffering intense pain.

The following taken from the Covington Gazette gives the character of her noble life, in a few words:

The sad death of Mrs. Linnie McBride, on Sunday morning last, has cast a gloom over the entire community. She was one of whom it could be said truly, 'She had not an enemy in the world.' Her life had been spent in doing kind deeds and labors of love for others, although she, herself, had been a sufferer nearly a lifetime from hip disease and needed much aid.

Although not a professing Christian until on her death-bed, her life had been devoted to the Christian's work. She had ever been an active worker in the Sunday School, until her duties as a mother prevented her from doing so. The loss to the family of such a mother cannot be estimated.

Her last few hours upon earth were spent in making some arrangements for her two little boys. The younger, she, by the consent of her husband gave to her mother, Sister Deeter, and the elder stays with his papa. After having thus arranged these earthly matters she was now ready to be offered, and asked the sorrowing, weeping friends to sing, 'Asleep in Jesus,' which on account of the solemn and affecting scene they were unable to do. She then, by herself sang two verses of that beautiful hymn, 'Asleep in Jesus,' and shortly after, peacefully and sweetly fell asleep, surrounded by her sorrowing friends. The high esteem in which she was held, was evidenced by the very large concourse of people attending the funeral.

She died June 23, 1889, aged 28 years, 4 months and 29 days. Funeral services by Elder Warbinton of the Christian church.

ISAAC KILHEFNER.

Ashland, Ohio.

On Sunday morning my first regular appointment at Louisville, Ohio, one young lady came forward and confessed Christ. I feel some what encouraged in my new field at Louisville. The brethren and sisters act as if they don't expect the preacher to do all the work. If I can have the hearty co-operation of the entire church, which I believe I can, we will give Satan considerable trouble during the year.

We only have one church in Stark Co., Ohio. Hence there is plenty of room for extending our boarders. Brethren Keim and Hang, two good, hard working preachers live in our Louisville congregation are willing to preach, and pray and plan. We think we can find enough work for all three of us. So we all expect to work and trust to God for the increase.

ISSAC D. BOWMAN.

Excursion to the Prohibition Convention at Zanesville via B. & O. R. R.

The B. and O. will sell excursion tickets to Zanesville for the Prohibition Convention at one lowest limited fare for the round trip. Tickets on sale July 23 and 24th, good returning until July 26th inclusive. For tickets call on agents of the B. and O.